

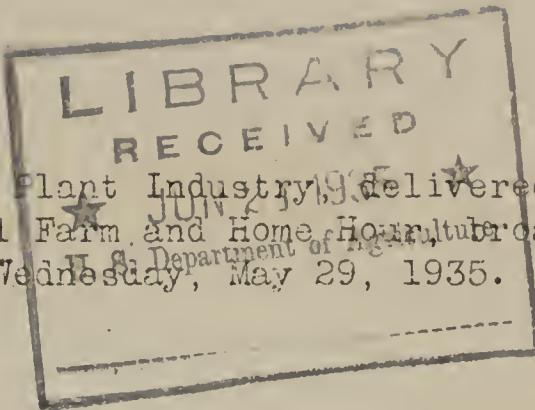
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THE GARDEN CALENDAR

A radio discussion by J. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 50 associate NBC radio stations, Wednesday, May 29, 1935.



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Hello Folks. It's been a long, long time since the Garden Calendar was last heard on the Farm and Home Hour and now I have only 5 or 6 minutes in which to make up for all that lost time. First, and before it slips my mind, I want to warn all of you folks who are writing to the Department of Agriculture for bulletins on any subject or for special information, to be extremely careful about giving your names and addresses plainly. There is scarcely a day passes but I receive one or more letters bearing the incomplete address of the sender. Sometimes these letters are not signed or the writer may be crowded for space and the name is signed in a cramped manner so that we can not make it out. In other cases the name of the post office is omitted and there we are with the information requested in the letter all ready to send to the writer but our mental capacity is scarcely equal to supplying the address. So, please, when you write to the Department for any information, be sure to write your name and address plainly.

Since my last garden calendar chat with you a lot of things have happened in our gardens and orchards. In some sections the weather has been rather cool and the growth of garden crops has been greatly retarded. In fact here at Washington the nights have been so cool that a little heat was needed in our homes. As a result of the cool weather we have been delayed in setting out tomatoes, planting lima beans and starting crops that require plenty of warmth. I have received numerous inquiries about tomato and sweetpotato plants dying after being set out in the field or garden. This has been due almost entirely to the cool nights and in some localities light frosts have been reported.

Well, anyway, it is warm enough today and it was warm yesterday and so from now on we may expect reasonably warm weather in this section at least and so we can go right ahead planting our tender garden crops. This talk about cold and frosts must sound odd to you folks in the southern sections who are using vegetables from your second or perhaps third planting, but there is nothing to prevent your going right ahead making more plantings of certain of the more important vegetables and having a supply all summer.

In many sections the gardens are now entering the trying period of the growing season, the period when the rainfall becomes irregular or insufficient and here is where a little irrigation will help to keep the crops healthy and growing. I had a letter from a lady the other day who told how she and her family had contrived to keep their garden growing through the drought period last summer by sewing 6-inch strips of canvas together to form a tube or hose about 2 inches in diameter then fastening about 30 feet of this porous canvas tubing on the end of an ordinary garden hose and letting the water filter or ooze through the pores of the canvas into the soil around the garden crops and the shrubbery around the house. The one end of the tube was simply fastened to the garden hose by twisting a piece of wire around it while the other end was sewed together to close the opening. Where you have the water from a well or a stock tank and can apply it by means of little furrows along the rows of garden crops you can do wonders in the way of keeping the garden in a good growing condition.

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I wish I could tell you some very simple or perhaps magic way to keep the weeds from growing in your gardens but I have never discovered any better method than to cultivate thoroughly and often and to kill the weeds while they are young and before they take a firm hold on the soil. I've heard of gardens that did not have a single weed in them but my garden never could be numbered among the perfect ones in this respect. If the weeds did not grow I am inclined to believe that some of us would get so shiftless and lazy that we would not even cultivate our gardens. Anyway the weeds are ever with us and it is up to us to have a good garden in spite of the weeds, the insects, the diseases, adverse weather conditions and all the rest of our gardening troubles.

Just recently it has been brought to my attention that there is a large amount of twig-blight on apple trees. There is very little that can be done about it, these blighted twigs are often so numerous as to make cutting them out an almost impossible task, and as a rule the trouble will largely cure itself on the apple trees as the season progresses. Not so with the pear trees and wherever there is a decided case of pear blight the blighted portions should be immediately cut out to prevent the disease spreading to the entire tree. The cut should be made at least 6 or 8 inches below where the blight shows and the pruning saw or shears should be disinfected between each and every cut, by sponging them with corrosive sublimate solution the same as is used as a disinfectant in sickrooms. Dissolve a tablet of the mercuric bichloride powder in a pint of water and use the solution to disinfect your pruning tools. Remember this solution is very poisonous.

In concluding our garden calendar chat today I want to remind you that the season is well under way in the southern sections but is just starting in the northern parts of the country, but regardless of where you are located you can usually have a good vegetable garden and lots of annuals and other flowers around your homes if you will give these matters reasonable attention. It takes work I'll admit but as the old Scotch lady said "It's wuth it."

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